United Nations A/C.3/66/SR.40

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
13 February 2012

Original: English

Third Committee

Summary record of the 40th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 2 November 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Zelioli (Vice-Chair) ..... (Italy)

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In the absence of Mr. Haniff, Mr. Zelioli (Italy), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 62: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (*continued*) (A/66/12 (Supp.) and Add.1 and A/66/321)

1. **Ms. Kolontai** (Belarus) said that her delegation had noted the growing role played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), notably in emergency situations. She likewise welcomed the further enhancement of its response capabilities, in particular through the elaboration of a new system of strategic stock management.

2. She noted with satisfaction the inclusion in the High Commissioner's report of the issue of human trafficking and of UNHCR's deepening cooperation with other organizations, including the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT). She fully expected the Office to intensify its efforts in that direction, in line with of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

3. UNHCR should consider what concrete strategies could be developed to protect refugees from human trafficking, as well as from sexual and gender violence. The High Commissioner's report had highlighted the immediacy of those issues, particularly in conflict zones.

4. Her country welcomed its constructive cooperation with UNHCR at the national level, while noting that the full potential of such cooperation had not yet been realized. The entry into force in 2011 of a country agreement with UNHCR had established the necessary preconditions to enhance the effectiveness of that collaboration.

5. Priority should be given to the diversification and expansion of UNHCR's operational activities in Belarus with the aim of improving social protections, establishing a centralized transit system, perfecting an identification system for asylum-seekers and more effectively integrating refugees into local communities. A response was likewise anticipated to the proposal that UNHCR should make use of the International Training Center on Migration and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (ITC) in Minsk by developing a specialized international training course highlighting core UNHCR activities relating to refugees, migration and statelessness.

6. The personal contribution of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Guterres, had been greatly appreciated and his visit to Belarus in 2010 had provided an important impetus to its evolving cooperation with UNHCR, which would continue to grow.

7. **Mr. Kamau** (Kenya) said that the number of displaced persons in the world had increased, owing in part to famine and conflict. His delegation joined the Secretary-General's call for the international community to resolve long-running conflicts and increase its efforts to address the needs of displaced populations.

8. Kenya had been a benevolent host to refugees from Somalia, the Sudan and other neighbouring countries for over twenty years. While most refugees from the Sudan had been repatriated since the restoration of peace in that country, the number of Somali refugees had been increasing owing to famine, drought and insecurity in their country. In fact, the third largest human settlement in Kenya was not a town or city, but a refugee camp hosting 600,000 mostly Somali refugees. The camp had been designed for only 90,000 people and the influx of people had overwhelmed the camp facilities and bled Kenya's capacity as a host country. Environmental degradation had devastated the surrounding area and competition for scarce resources had led to tensions with nearby communities. In addition, with armed groups taking advantage of the reigning lawlessness in Somalia, incidences of human trafficking, arms smuggling, abduction and kidnapping had spiked both inside and outside the refugee camps. Attacks on refugees and aid workers were also on the rise, while terror threats and attacks by Al-Shabaab militia groups were a major security concern throughout Kenya.

9. The international community, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations operating in Kenya must recognize the magnitude of the burden carried by the Kenyan Government and urgently explore new options to provide for international refugees. While his Government was committed to fulfilling its obligations to protect refugees, the

continued instability in Somalia made it increasingly difficult to provide for the security of Kenyans, refugees and humanitarian workers, and to ensure the protection of the environment.

10. The Government was taking medium- and long-term measures to address the situation. Given that it was an Al-Shabaab blockade against relief agencies that was causing many Somalis to migrate in search of humanitarian assistance, an initiative was under way to create safe zones within Somalia, in cooperation with the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Somalia Transitional Federal Government. Relocating refugees to the safe zones would alleviate some of the congestion around the camps. In addition, Kenya had recently hosted a summit on the Horn of Africa crisis, which had produced a strategy setting out actions required by States in the region and other stakeholders to address the crisis. He urged the international community, including UNHCR and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to support the efforts to implement that strategy and to create safe zones in Somalia. Actions to address the root causes of the conflict in Somalia were also needed. Promoting regional peace and preventing conflict would stem the influx of new refugees and ensure the voluntary repatriation of existing refugees.

11. His delegation appreciated the solidarity shown by the international community towards the Horn of Africa. His Government looked forward to strengthening relationships with UNHCR and other agencies to promote peace and development in Kenya.

12. **Ms. Khanum** (Pakistan) said that her Government had been partnering with UNHCR since Afghan refugees had begun migrating to Pakistan 30 years ago. Since that time, the country had become host to the largest refugee population in the world, with negative effects on its economy, security and sociocultural situation, including a reduction in job prospects and stress on public infrastructure. The recent floods in the country and the global financial and food crises had compounded those challenges. Her Government had introduced several programmes to better meet the needs of Afghan immigrants and to respond to the impacts of that population on the environment and society. However, there was still a great need for the international community to redouble its efforts to address the situation of protracted refugees. The donor community and UNHCR should aim at accelerating reintegration, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Afghanistan, which would enable Afghan refugees to return to their homeland. The international community should also share the responsibility for those refugees by increasing funding for relevant programmes in host countries and by offering the possibility of third-country resettlement. The fate of refugees, returnees and displaced persons must be recognized as a common responsibility. Strategies must be developed to protect them in ways that did not create new political, economic or social tensions among host communities.

13. **Ms. Bouhamidi** (Morocco) said that her delegation commended the efforts of UNHCR to diversify its partnerships with a view to increasing support for specific refugee populations. The past year had been marked by various natural and man-made crises, particularly in Africa, which had intensified the complex humanitarian challenges faced by UNHCR, with the number of displaced persons reaching its highest level in 15 years. New flows of forcibly displaced persons were exacerbating already difficult protracted refugee situations. Under such circumstances, respect for humanitarian law and the rights of refugees must be made a priority.

14. The implementation by UNHCR of global recommendations on voluntary return had led to the repatriation of a number of refugees in protracted situations. However, it was regrettable that UNHCR had not been able to consider the refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria, within its road maps for concluding long-term refugee situations in various African countries. The host country had not allowed UNHCR to register the refugee population in Tindouf, despite the critical role of accurate surveys of refugees in determining their needs and facilitating their voluntary return. UNHCR must be allowed to act in accordance with its mandate, free from the imposition of any political or ideological barriers by host countries. To subject the eminently social mission of UNHCR to political conditionalities would only serve to perpetuate humanitarian tragedies within refugee camps, especially in Africa.

15. Her Government welcomed the resumption of family visits by air between refugees living in the Tindouf camps and their families in Western Sahara early that year, after months of suspension. The commitment by all parties to implement the

Confidence Building Measures programme was also a positive development.

16. The ministerial-level meeting to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees should advocate a refugee protection system based on accurate registration. In addition, the international community should view the anniversary as the time to provide UNHCR with the resources it needed to fulfil its mission and to urge States parties to respect their obligations to refugees without delay.

17. **Mr. Šćepanović** (Montenegro) said that his Government had made the resolution of the status of refugees and displaced persons a key target in its progress towards European integration. A strategy and action plan covering the period 2012-2015 had been adopted, which provided a two-pronged solution to the situation: the integration of refugees into Montegrin society and their voluntary return to their countries of origin. The strategy had been drafted in collaboration with UNHCR and the European Union and placed a special emphasis on the Konik refugee camp, which had been highlighted as the most pressing refugee-related issue in the country in the European Commission Opinion on Montenegro's application for membership of the European Union. Integration of refugees was promoted by enabling their access to social protection, jobs and housing, in particular for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian populations. Efforts to support voluntary repatriation would benefit from the recently signed bilateral agreements with Kosovo and coordination with municipal governments. Monitoring of the action plan, including data collection and analysis, would be conducted by a coordination committee. Resolving the legal status of refugees and displaced persons, with a view to improving their access to social services, had also been made a priority.

18. With regard to the nearly 14,000 displaced persons from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, the Government had granted them the status of foreign nationals with permanent residence and offered them free access to social protection services. Agreements had been reached among Montenegro and those three countries on issues such as data exchange, civil documentation and trust fund mechanisms. Recent multilateral meetings had resulted in a programme aimed at addressing the needs of the most vulnerable refugees in the Western Balkan region. Montenegro stood ready to find lasting solutions in cooperation with other States in the region. However, implementation of the regional programme would require support from the international and donor community.

19. **Mr. Starčević** (Serbia) said that the continued engagement of UNHCR and the personal efforts of the High Commissioner in dealing with the protracted refugee situation in South-East Europe were commendable. Serbia had been faced with a situation of internally displaced persons for nearly two decades. While his delegation recognized the need for cooperation between countries of origin and receiving countries, a lasting solution to the protracted refugee situation would not be possible without the involvement of international actors and the donor community.

20. In collaboration with UNHCR, the European Commission, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, Serbia had launched an initiative to find solutions for the refugees in the Western Balkans following the period of conflict from 1991 to 1995. That process had resulted in an agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia on a regional programme to achieve durable solutions for the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons. The programme aimed to end protracted displacement in the region through the provision of permanent housing and the closing of migrant centres, while fully respecting the right of every refugee to opt for voluntary return or local integration. The programme would be presented at the upcoming Ministerial Review Conference on Solving the Refugee Situation in the Western Balkans. A donor conference was also planned in 2012 to raise funds for national projects that were an integral component of the regional programme. Support from donors would be critical to implementing the project. A successful programme would provide a model for resolving protracted refugee crises in other parts of the world and would give new impetus to reconciliation in the region.

21. The 250,000 internally displaced persons who had been forced to leave the province of Kosovo and Metohija in 1999 continued to be denied return to their homes in the province owing to security concerns, legal and administrative obstacles, lack of progress in the reconstruction of housing and an extremely hostile environment. The socio-economic situation of internally displaced persons was also a pressing issue.

The Government of Serbia was fully aware of its responsibility to provide protection and assistance to that group and would continue to make efforts to fulfil its obligations, despite the current economic crisis. Noting that the province of Kosovo had been under United Nations interim administration since 1999, he called on all international parties in Kosovo to address the issue of internally displaced persons as an urgent matter. His delegation hoped that the UNHCR budget for operations in Kosovo would remain at existing levels.

22. He commended the helpful role UNHCR had played in resolving the situation in South-East Europe for some time, including its active engagement in preparing for the Ministerial Review Conference. However, as a humanitarian agency, UNHCR was not in a position to tackle the security situation and the issues related to the status of the province of Kosovo, in particular after the 2008 unilateral declaration of independence, which were the root causes of internal displacement in Serbia. His Government would continue to support UNHCR efforts to address complex situations of displacement.

23. **Mr. Mikec** (Croatia) said that his Government was fully engaged in efforts to ensure the protection of refugees and find solutions to their plight. A housing programme provided homes for returnees in need and funded the reconstruction and repossession of property damaged or occupied during the war. In addition, the deadline for submission of housing requests from returnees had been extended. His Government urged other countries in the region to implement similar national housing programmes.

24. His Government welcomed the regional programme agreed upon by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia, which focused on ensuring adequate housing for vulnerable refugees and had demonstrated the effectiveness of targeted regional collaboration in resolving refugee situations. Croatia was confident that the upcoming Ministerial Review Conference on Solving the Refugee Situation in the Western Balkans would establish concrete goals.

25. As a new member of the UNHCR Executive Committee, Croatia stood ready to vigorously uphold international standards and support refugee protection at all levels. Full respect for international principles, in particular non-refoulement guarantees and durable solutions, were of the utmost importance. The 60th anniversary of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was an occasion to use the core legal values of the international protection of refugees as a basis for addressing new challenges, such as displacements caused by climate change and natural and man-made disasters. The upcoming ministerial-level meeting to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Convention should agree on a way forward and on durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons.

26. **Mr. Nofukuka** (South Africa) welcomed the UNHCR internal reforms, which had facilitated the increase in resources for previously underfunded refugee programmes and the improvement of emergency response capacities. The increase in support for programmes in Africa was also welcome, in particular the resources allocated to respond to the current challenges in the Horn of Africa.

27. Noting that there had been an increase in the global number of refugees in 2010, he called on Governments to address the root causes of refugee situations. South Africa was committed to the protection of refugees and viewed migration as contributing to the economic, social and cultural development of the country. Poverty must be addressed by focusing on socio-economic development, in particular strategies to increase the development of human resources and reverse the "brain drain".

28. South Africa was one of the major destinations of asylum-seekers. However, many were in search of better economic prospects and did not fall into the asylum-seeker category. To better secure the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees, South Africa's laws on immigration had been amended to distinguish between economic migrants and genuine asylum-seekers. Cooperation at both the regional and bilateral level among States members of the Southern African Development Community needed to be strengthened in order to improve identification of asylum-seekers.

29. Given that all States faced the challenges posed by mixed migration, accurate migration data and improved data analysis were also needed to ensure the development of evidence-based policies. His Government stood ready to work with UNHCR in that regard. States should also strive to strengthen their legal framework and national capacity to ensure respect for the rights of all migrants. Lastly, the situation of people in protracted refugee situations was of particular concern. Multilateral action was needed to

address the root causes of such situations, including international intervention in conflict situations.

30. **Mr. Kim** Soo Gwon (Republic of Korea) said that the UNHCR reform process had enhanced its emergency response capacity. As noted in the UNHCR report, failure to respect the principle of non-refoulement was one of the greatest challenges to ensuring the protection of refugees. The reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had noted that refugees from that country faced a risk of refoulement by several States in the region, an issue that was of particular concern to his delegation. His Government urged all Member States to respect their non-refoulement obligations. The Republic of Korea would be reaffirming its commitment to the cause of protecting and assisting refugees at the upcoming ministerial-level meeting to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

31. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that the drought and famine in the Horn of Africa and the adverse effects of climate change had been increasing the number of refugees and displaced persons in the Mediterranean region and Malta had been among the countries with the highest number of asylum-seekers in 2011. The sinking of small boats crowded beyond capacity with illegal immigrants had become a too frequent occurrence in the Mediterranean, as human traffickers attempted to exploit asylum situations to the fullest. The influx of illegal immigrants also had a negative impact on transit countries, undermined national asylum policies and strained relations between States.

32. The recent popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya had generated a large increase in internally displaced persons and refugees seeking asylum in neighbouring countries. Malta had taken on a strategic role during the Arab Spring, serving as the logistical and transit base for evacuation operations. In addition, a humanitarian hub in Malta continued to coordinate relief services to Libya provided by international organizations, non-governmental organizations and individual States.

33. A European asylum support office had been opened in Malta that year in order to streamline the asylum policies of European Union Member States and improve cooperation between authorities. His own Government provided asylum to a disproportionately high number of applicants, given its geographic limitations and high population density.

34. Owing to the recent influx of immigrants from Libya to Malta, a 2010 pilot project to relocate refugees to other European Union countries had been extended. Another resettlement project in place since 2007 relocated beneficiaries of international protection to the United States. His Government was grateful to the participating countries and UNHCR for their assistance in those efforts. Beneficiaries of protection were also provided with a durable solution. UNHCR should encourage other Member States to help resettle refugees and displaced persons from Malta. The Governments of the countries of origin must also do more to improve their national situation.

35. **Ms. Tadesse** (Ethiopia) said that the emergence of complex and interconnected global challenges such as climate change and security threats had complicated the protection of refugees. In Africa, protracted wars, new conflicts and natural disasters had produced the largest number of refugees and internationally displaced persons in the world. International cooperation was critical to strengthening the capacity of UNHCR and host countries that were sharing their limited resources with people forced to leave their homelands.

36. The Government of Ethiopia had developed a legislative and management framework to ensure the protection of refugees. In addition, in collaboration with UNHCR, it had opened new refugee camps and had been working on a voluntary repatriation, reintegration and resettlement programme. However, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia had exacerbated the flow of refugees into the country, straining the limited capacity of the Government. The registration and screening process had been overwhelmed and shelter and basic services were at their limit. The arrival of children with acute malnutrition and the prevalence of communicable diseases among refugees had further aggravated the crisis. Her Government, together with humanitarian agencies, had focused relief efforts on assisting unaccompanied children, protecting refugees against sexual abuse and providing education to refugee children. In addition, enhanced health and nutrition interventions by UNHCR had reduced mortality rates in camps. She called on donors, humanitarian agencies and the international community at large to scale up their assistance both to meet the immediate needs of refugees and to tackle the long-

term, underlying problems that had left so many people in danger.

37. **Mr. Ilyassov** (Kazakhstan) said that the past decade had witnessed an increase in the scale, scope, and complexity of mixed migratory movements in Central Asia. Mass migration flows constituted a problem for Europe and America as well as for the countries of the region, and his Government considered regulation of migration a priority issue. Europe was experiencing the effects of recent disturbances in the Middle East and North Africa.

38. Migrants from neighbouring States constituted the main mixed flow into his country because of its status as a stable developing country. Kazakhstan therefore attached great importance to cooperation with the appropriate United Nations agencies. Under the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a Regional Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in Central Asia had been held on 15 and 16 March 2011 in Almaty. The Conference, which had a number of co-sponsors and participants, had enhanced understanding of mixed migratory movements. The resulting Almaty Declaration emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation and of a differentiated approach to identify individuals who deserved international protection and assistance as well as those posing a threat to security. A regional framework structure would be established to unite the efforts of all stakeholders.

39. **Ms. Shiolashvili** (Georgia) said that one of the most appalling humanitarian issues of her country was the return of hundreds of thousands of Georgians who had been expelled from the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions in several waves of ethnic cleansing in the 1990s and after the 2008 war. The human rights of the few expellees who had returned to their homes were being violated. The right of return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees was being subverted by politically motivated obstructionism.

40. Her country attached great importance to UNHCR participation in the Geneva talks between Georgia and Russia concerning, among other issues, the security and safe return of IDPs and refugees to their homes in the occupied areas, and was concerned about the lack of progress due to the unconstructive Russian approach.

41. Her Government was committed to ensuring adequate living conditions for IDPs in Georgia, and was providing them with temporary housing and social services, as well as encouraging their social and economic reintegration through the IDP Community Development Project and its own State Strategy on IDPs.

42. **Mr. Sarabi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that a large number of refugees and displaced persons had been living in his country since the late 1970s. In 2011 the Government had conducted the seventh Refugee and Displaced Persons Census, updated data and issued new residence cards, and formulated plans for identifying vulnerable people.

43. Concerns about payment of health and medical costs of the refugees had led to implementation of the first phase of a comprehensive supplemental health insurance plan, to which UNHCR contributed. Expenditure by his country for the assistance provided to refugees far exceeded international and UNHCR assistance, which needed to be increased.

44. Most of the refugees came from Afghanistan, which needed assistance with achieving sustainable development that would allow the refugees to return home. His country believed that the repatriation budget would better encourage voluntary repatriation if it were spent on settlement and reintegration costs rather than on cash and in kind assistance. More international efforts and resources were needed.

45. With regard to paragraph 20 of the UNHCR report (A/66/12), his delegation believed that the causes of migration and asylum-seeking from the countries listed should not be specified unless they were substantiated.

46. **Mr. Elbahi** (Sudan) said that his country, a Party to the Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol, had hosted a large number of refugees from neighbouring countries over several decades. Also during that period, natural disasters and internal conflicts in the Sudan had led to an increase in the numbers of Sudanese refugees fleeing to other countries in the region, placing an additional displacement-related burden on his country. Based on its conviction that the responsibility for refugee issues lay with States, the Sudan had enacted national legislation on displaced persons that enshrined the humanitarian commitments contained in the relevant regional and international instruments and in the

Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In order to address the root causes of displacement and refugee crises, the Sudan had also met all its commitments under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including acceptance of the results of the Southern Sudan Referendum. Moreover, his country's signing of the Doha Agreement for peace in Darfur had resulted in an improvement in the security situation, thus contributing to the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes under voluntary return programmes.

47. Reiterating his Government's commitment to cooperating with all relevant United Nations agencies, especially UNHCR, he pointed out that the number of Sudanese who had crossed the border into Ethiopia because of the rebellion led by former Blue Nile governor Malik Agar in defiance of the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on security arrangements, did not exceed a few thousand, contrary to what was stated in the report of the High Commissioner. In that connection, the Sudan was exerting great efforts to restore security to the Blue Nile and Kordofan regions and facilitate the return of refugees to their homes.

48. His country's cooperation with all relevant entities would take the form of active participation centred on the principle of burden-sharing, throughout the transition from the emergency relief stage to that of establishing development projects in affected regions. In closing, his delegation wished to remind the international community and donor countries of the necessity of providing support for voluntary return programmes targeting Sudanese refugees and internally displaced persons, and called on countries to abide by their commitments so that refugees could return home and enjoy stability.

49. **Ms. Boiko** (Ukraine) welcomed the structural and administrative reforms being undertaken by UNHCR and emphasized the importance of diversification of humanitarian funding resources.

50. She noted the approval in 2011 of the Concept of State Migration Policy and establishment of the State Migration Service. Since 2009 her Government had been implementing an action plan for integration of recognized refugees into the Ukrainian community. The recent adoption by the Ukrainian parliament of the law on refugees and persons in need of complementary or temporary protection was a major step towards developing an asylum system that met international standards and best practices of the European Union.

51. Her country appreciated the cooperation of the UNHCR Regional Office for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in providing assistance for immigrants and refugees seeking asylum, and its support in improving her country's legislation on protection of refugees' rights.

52. **Mr. Jafarov** (Azerbaijan) said that lack of agreement on political issues could not be used as a pretext for ignoring problems caused by continued and deliberate disregard for international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict and military occupation. The occupation of almost one fifth of the territory of Azerbaijan by its neighbour Armenia had made one out of every nine persons in the country an internally displaced person or a refugee. Azerbaijan had one of the highest proportions of refugees and displaced persons in the world. His Government had made major efforts towards resolving their housing problems and including them in poverty reduction and economic development strategies and projects. Increased international awareness of the pertinent issues was necessary.

53. The rights of Azerbaijani citizens in Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts had been violated by their expulsion. Despite international efforts, Armenia was continuing its policy of installing ethnic Armenian settlers in the occupied territories. Azerbaijan was committed to continuing its close collaboration with UNHCR to overcome the related challenges.

54. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) noted that the report used the terms "people of concern", "persons of concern" and "populations of concern" and suggested that one term be chosen and used consistently. His country appreciated the reduction since 2010 of the number of such persons in the world, and hoped that UNHCR would be able to address the new challenges resulting from international conflict and the frequency and magnitude of natural disasters.

55. For more than two decades, Bangladesh had been hosting Myanmar refugees, a situation that had been given priority under the Global Plan of Action for 2009-2011 launched by UNHCR in 2008. Several hundred thousand people had crossed the border illegally in recent years. Most of the registered refugees who had entered in 1991 had voluntarily

returned to their homeland, but there had been no repatriations since 2005.

56. His country saw little benefit in piecemeal, sporadic resettlement; it called for a regional approach and resumption of repatriation activity. It welcomed the 2011 agreement by Myanmar to repatriate previously cleared Myanmar refugees after further verification.

57. **Mr. Dorbes** (International Committee of the Red Cross — ICRC) said that the focus should be on preventing the circumstances and events that caused people to flee their homes. The combination of violence and natural disasters often left communities totally unable to cope. Emergency assistance had to go hand in hand with helping people regain their self-sufficiency.

58. Between January and May 2011, ICRC had provided relief to 2.85 million displaced persons from 30 countries. Its situation assessments and operating responses combined various modes of action aimed at persuading authorities and other stakeholders to meet their assistance obligations, as well as distributing direct assistance and strengthening the self-protection ability of displaced groups.

59. State authorities and non-State actors needed to support the provision of assistance and protection by humanitarian organizations such as ICRC, and had to address the consequences and the root causes of displacement. Greater respect for international humanitarian law would reduce the need for humanitarian response and permit a scaling-back of demand for assistance.

60. **Ms. Cooper** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies — IFRC) said that numerous factors were driving migration within and beyond State borders, and that vulnerable migrants came from a variety of backgrounds and locations and were on the move for an increasing number of reasons. The Federation focused on individual needs, vulnerabilities, and potential of all migrants. It urged States to respect migrants' human rights and to commit to actions that would improve the migratory journey for the increasing numbers of people on the move.

61. The Federation was planning its 31st international conference to be held in Geneva in November 2011, which would bring together IFRC, ICRC, representatives of the national societies, and the 194 States parties to the Geneva Conventions. A draft resolution on practical objectives relating to migration had been prepared for submission to the Conference.

62. **Ms. Klein Solomon** (International Organization for Migration — IOM) mentioned the increased cooperation and collaboration between UNHCR and IOM in working with Governments concerned on assistance in migration and mobility situations. One example was the assistance recently provided to more than 200,000 migrant workers from 54 countries fleeing Libya.

63. Because of the multidimensionality of current movements of people, mixed migration flows continued to be a major shared concern. The collaboration of UNHCR and IOM was essential in order to provide effective support to Governments and protect migrants.

64. Climate change and environment degradation and their impact, extreme political events, and other challenges were forcing more persons into migration, and were of critical concern to both agencies, which were working together on refugee protection (UNHCR) and resettlement operations (IOM). Both the UNHCR High Commissioner and the Director General of IOM had called for increasing the number of resettlement slots and locations, especially in view of decreasing possibilities for return of refugees.

65. **Ms. Freimane-Deksne** (Latvia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to statements made on 1 November 2011 by the representative of the Russian Federation in respect of agenda item 62, said that his reference to her country in the context of statelessness constituted deliberate misinformation. Latvia was a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and national legislation had been brought into conformity with both instruments. Currently there were 177 stateless persons residing in Latvia. Although her country was not a successor State to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), it had granted privileged status and preferential access to the naturalization process and citizenship to former USSR citizens living in Latvia. Her country was committed to continuously improving human rights and guarantees and protecting the human rights of all its inhabitants, irrespective of their legal status.

66. **Ms. Kocharyan** (Armenia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement by the

representative of Azerbaijan containing several references to her country, regretted the continuing attempts by Azerbaijan to use every agenda item for its anti-Armenian propaganda. Its distortions were attempts to juggle with statistical data contained in reports by relevant international institutions, including UNHCR, and constituted yet another propagandistic attempt to blame Armenia for non-existent problems. She wondered why a country so rich in oil and foreign investment could not resolve the problem of IDPs and refugees, or at least improve their poor living conditions. Apparently the Government of Azerbaijan was not interested in resolving the refugee issue; otherwise, a solution would have been found. Azerbaijan was using the refugees as instruments to bring political pressure to bear on international bodies mediating the continuing conflict.

67. Concerning the reference to settlement of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, their return to their homes did not violate any norms of international law. Armenia had been the first East European country to face the refugee problem after the massacres in Azerbaijan from 1988 to 1990 had forced the flight of half a million Armenians from that country.

68. Her country had no oil fields, and its financial resources could not be compared with those of Azerbaijan. It had nevertheless implemented programmes to rehabilitate refugees and IDPs and integrate them into its society. It looked forward to an end to the unnecessary propagandistic attacks by Azerbaijan, and hoped that that country would instead concentrate on trying to make life easier for the refugees until a definitive solution to the problem could be found.

69. **Mr. Goltyaev** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to statements previously made by the representatives of Latvia and Estonia, said that the information furnished by his country had been based on independent reports indicating that stateless persons in Latvia and Estonia continued to be the victims of discrimination and violation of their rights.

70. **Mr. Jafarov** (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statements made by the Armenian delegation, said that the expulsion of Azerbaijanis from the occupied territories was a confirmed fact. The rights of internally displaced Azerbaijanis to non-discriminatory treatment had been violated by Armenia. The aim of the military conflict in the territory had been the creation of a mono-ethnic culture by means of expulsion of the indigenous ethnic Azerbaijani population and refusal to permit their return, and the demographic changes reflected these discriminatory actions. Armenia's direct and indirect actions in occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and other occupied regions and surrounding areas, all recognized as subject to Azerbaijani sovereignty, were in breach of international law.

71. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the fact that the Government of Azerbaijan had used its oil revenues to alleviate the problems of the IDP and refugee population. Armenia needed to realize that a prompt end to its illegal occupation of the territory of neighbouring nations was the only route to lasting peace and stability.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.